



Exploring Gender Prospective in Small-Scale Fisheries Management

Krishnaveni K.N.^{1*}, Sudarshan S.², Prabu E.¹, Manikandan K.¹ and Sathishkumar G.¹

¹Directorate of Incubation and Vocational Training in Aquaculture, Tamil Nadu Dr. J. Jayalalithaa Fisheries University, Muttukadu, Chennai, Tamil Nadu (603 112), India

²School of Fisheries, Centurion University of Technology & Management, Paralakhemundi, Odisha (761 211), India



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Corresponding Author

Krishnaveni K.N.

✉: venikitty1234@gmail.com

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Abstract

The small-scale fisheries sector tends to be firmly rooted in local communities, traditions and values. Many small-scale fishers are self-employed and usually provide fish for direct consumption within their households or communities. In fisheries Small-scale fisheries (SSF) sector plays major role towards small-scale fishers. It is essential to study the gender prospective due to their significant fishing activities. This paper reviews about the gender role in fisheries sector and how it's differed in terms of fishing grounds, culture and routines of work. In this paper, we briefly review their roles in fishing and their applicability to small-scale fisheries. This review sheds light on aspect of the application of gender research to fisheries sector such as fishing activities, culture aspects and invisible role of women.

Keywords: Fisheries, Gender prospective, Small-scale fishers, Women

Introduction

Traditional fisheries involving fishing households using relatively small amount of capital and energy, relatively small fishing vessels, making short fishing trips, close to shore, mainly for local consumption. Almost entire fishery may be considered as small-scale fisheries, which not only contributes to nutrition, food security, poverty alleviation and trade but also closely associated with the sustainable livelihood of millions of fishers and fish workers through generations (Solano *et al.*, 2021). Fisheries Sector is contributing to the socio-economic development of the India. It is a source of over 14 million people. The total fishermen population as per Livestock Census, 2003 was 1,44,85,354, which include 46,96,158 males, 40,33,963 females and 57,55,233 children. Fishermen engaged full time in fishing operations were 9,33,124 and part time were 10,72,079 (Agapito *et al.*, 2019). There is a need to understand the difference and benefits of small-scale fisheries from large scale (Figure 1).

Characteristics of Small-Scale Fisheries in India

The small-scale fishery has some of the following attributes.

1. Use of small craft and simple gear of relatively low capital intensity.
2. Communities have good understanding of the coastal systems and resources, which is passed on from generation to generation.
3. Fishers largely work as share-workers or owner-operators of their fishing craft.
4. Marked by decentralized and scattered settlement pattern.
5. Fishing is restricted to near shore waters in single day or night operations.
6. Linked to local market networks.
7. Considerable financial dependence on middlemen and those who buy their harvest.
8. Relatively socially and economically disadvantaged compared with other sections of the society, with low employment and low mobility out of fishing.

Importance of Study the Gender Prospective in Small Scale Fisheries

More than 90% of the world's fishers are employed in

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
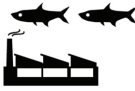





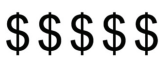

Fisheries benefits		
	Large-scale	Small-scale
Annual landings for human consumption	 about 60 million tonnes	 about 27 million tonnes
Annual catch discarded at sea	 9 million tonnes	 Almost none
Annual catch for industrial reduction to fishmeal and oil, etc.	 26 million tonnes	 Almost none
Fuel used per tonne of fish for human consumption	 10-20 tonnes	 2-5 tonnes
Number of fishers employed	 about 1/2 million	 about 12 million
Government subsidies (billions of USD)	 25-30 billion USD	 5-7 billion USD

Figure 1: Schematic illustration of large and small-scale fisheries prevailing in most countries of the world (Lam, 2016)

small-scale fishing. All the vessels operated in India may be classified under small-scale category. Compared to industrial fisheries practiced, small scale fisheries in general, and motorized and non-motorized fisheries in particular, are environment friendly, causes less harm to the habitats and discard less fish. Due to severe competition from the mechanized sector and declining catches, the small-scale sector is constantly under pressure to introduce technological changes (Mangubhai and Lawless, 2021). Introduction of outboard motor and ring seine are important technological advancements in the small-scale fisheries sector over the years. Among the fisheries sector, motorized and non-motorized fisheries will be most vulnerable to climate change. Their survival depends to a large extent on the recognition and protection or acquired fishing rights. In Indian marine fisheries, the Over All Length (OAL) of commercial fishing vessels rarely exceeds 20 m (except for the hired Letter of Permit (LOP) vessels (Lam, 2016).

Fishing was done by fishermen Fishing vessels are classified as mechanized, motorized and non-motorized based in the technology adapted for propulsion and fishing. Mechanized vessels are relatively larger with the engine fitted inside the vessel (inboard engine), motorized vessels are smaller with engine fitted outside the boat (outboard engine) and non-motorized boats, which do not use any mechanical device for propulsion and fishing. Within the mechanized

subsector, there are diversified craft-types, ranging in overall length from 9 m to 20 m. Among these, the smaller boats (less than approximately 13 m OAL) undertake single day cruises, fishing in grounds near their base, and the larger ones (mostly trawlers, > 13 m OAL) undertake multiday fishing lasting up to seven days in fishing grounds far away from their base.

Role of Gender in Fishing Activities

Women are generally expected to dress in typically feminine ways and be polite, accommodating, and nurturing. Men are generally expected to be strong, aggressive, and bold. Every society, ethnic group, and culture has gender role expectations, but they can be very different from group to group. In the inland fisheries of many countries’ women are engaged in fishing and are taking a leading role in the rapid growth of aquaculture. They own and manage fishing boats and have their own fishing gear. In aquaculture, women often carry out most of the work of feeding, harvesting and processing fish and shellfish.

Fishing Grounds

The nature of fishing areas and their development has played a crucial role in promoting gender disparities. Traditionally, men have fished offshore while women have concentrated on inshore activities through the collecting or gleaning of different species from the reef and other inshore areas (Lam, 2016). Most development agents encourage the promotion of offshore fishing activities to generate income and to reduce the pressure on inshore water resources. These results in targeting only those involved in this type of fishing - men at the expense of women (Agapito et al., 2019).

Routine and Hours of Fishing

The routine of catching fish determines the daily pattern of household activities. Many fishers leave for fishing at night. If their wives work during the day, there is little or no opportunity for family life. Fish is highly perishable. Fisher folk have few places for storage, and lack the facilities to preserve their products. Unless the fish is sold immediately, they lose the opportunity to get the best prices from the middlemen waiting on the beach. Thus, it is common that women are found selling fish in the community or in the regional markets, immediately after the men have landed. Active fishing on the lake is predominantly men’s work. Women respondents reported that most women did not join the offshore fishing activity because it required a lot of time, energy, and that it was very risky. In the same survey, women confirmed that there is no taboo, no religious or traditional beliefs that prohibited women from fishing.

Fish Farming

Despite the efforts of fisheries agencies to promote fish farming in fishing and farming communities, the gender imbalance have been noted (Figure 2). In most cases, men are the owners of the ponds while women and children manage the ponds. For women involved in such activities, group organization has been the strategic option. The organizations include churches, schools, registered and unregistered women’s groups, and village government.

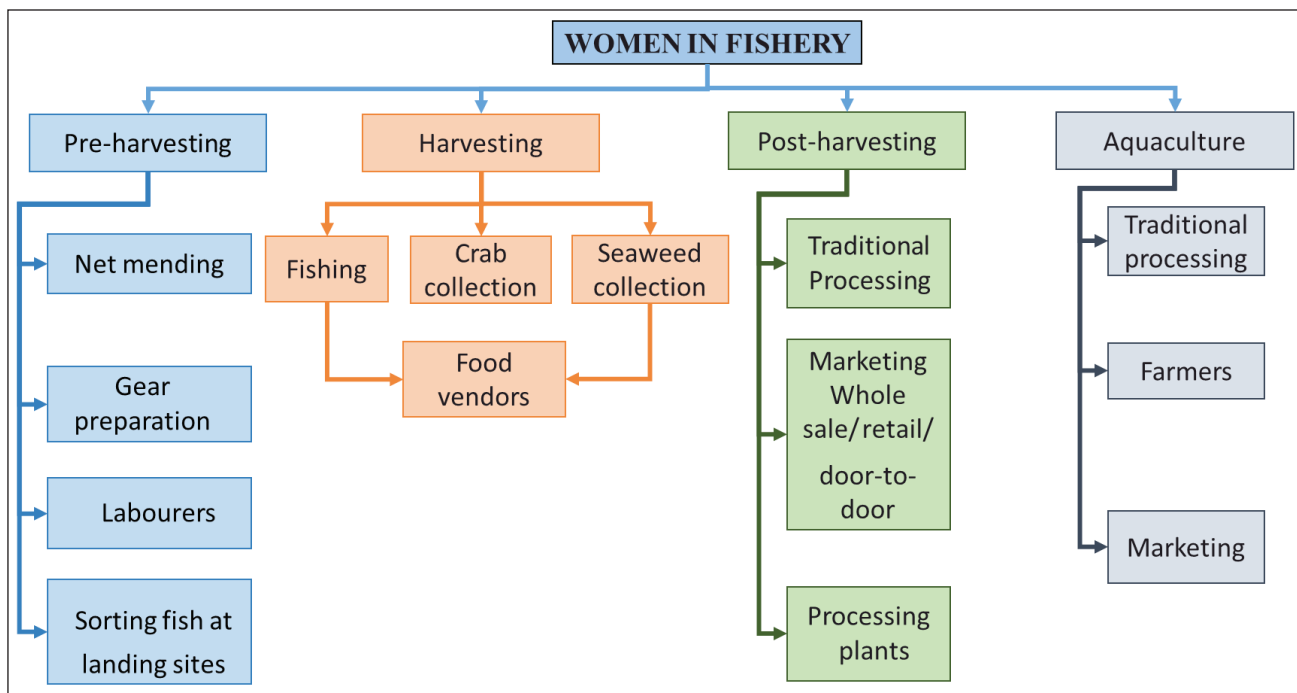


Figure 2. Women’s role in fisheries (Handbook on Fisheries Statistics, 2014)

Conclusion

Although, millions of women engage in small scale fisheries, the gender segregated labour division highlights fishing for men and processing for women that can be disproved with the existing literature. Shifting roles of women and men in fishing are mainly adaptations to the environment, family income, market, and responsibilities but poorly documented. Thus, invisibility, restrictions on access and control of resources, discrimination in participation and decision making, and discrimination on need to be addressed and to be solved.

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